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FM AMEMBASSY TIRANA  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6831  
RUEHUP/AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST IMMEDIATE 0567  
RHMCSUU/FBI WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
INFO RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEHZG/NATO EU COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TIRANA 000204

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DEPT FOR EUR/SCE  
DEPT OF JUSTICE FOR OPDAT, ICITAP  
EMBASSY BUDAPEST FOR LEGAT ROBERTS  
USAID FOR DCHA/OFDA, AID/W

E.O. 12958:N/A  
TAGS: [KCRM](#) [EAID](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [SENV](#) [ASEC](#) [AL](#)  
SUBJECT: ALBANIAN PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE SEEKS URGENT ASSISTANCE TO  
INVESTIGATE BLAST SITE

REF: A) TIRANA 200 B) TIRANA 202

11. (U) This is an action request -- please see para 3.

12. (U) Prosecutor General Ina Rama has assigned the chief of the Tirana district prosecutor's office, Genti Xholi, to head the criminal investigation into the causes of the fatal March 15 explosion. (Note: Xholi is well and favorably known to Embassy's OPDAT section.) Late in the evening of March 18, Ambassador received two letters of request for urgent FBI assistance in the investigation. One requests assistance in victim identification and crime scene investigation. The second requests assistance tracking down information on Southern Ammunition Company in South Carolina, the company apparently contracted by the Ministry of Defense to operate at the scene of the explosion. Informal Embassy translations of the texts follow in paras 4 and 5.

13. (SBU) Ambassador fully supports these requests and urges the fastest possible positive reply. Because of the connection of a U.S. company to the incident, and despite the fact that the company had no/no USG connection or contact prior to the explosion, the U.S. has received unfavorable media attention, an unusual phenomenon in Albania. In addition to the welcome assistance from EUCOM, State's PM/WRA, and USAID, it would be extremely helpful for the U.S. to help to ensure a professional, thorough, transparent investigation. Such an investigation is directly important to Albania's political stability and democratic development. Albania lacks the resources to conduct the quality of investigation U.S. authorities can mount. Moreover, the Albanian public puts great trust in the professionalism and impartiality of USG institutions, and our assistance will help increase confidence, countering the unfavorable attention caused by Southern Ammunitions connection to the tragedy. We urgently request and appreciate Department and FBI's prompt attention and support.

14. (U) Begin text, informal Embassy translation of PG Rama's request for investigative assistance:

Protocol No. 822  
Tirana, March 18, 2008

Re: Assistance requested for the criminal investigation of Gerdec explosion

To: the U.S. Embassy

Honored Mr. Ambassador,

Expressing my highest consideration, I take this opportunity to present to You my official request for assistance related to the recent events in Gerdec village nearby Tirana, where a vast explosion caused the death of a considerable number of persons as well as many wounded and property damage. The prosecutor's office has started a criminal investigation of this case.

During the investigations carried out until now, it has been determined that the explosion occurred in an area used for the dismantling of military ammunitions. All actions for the dismantling of military ammunitions were done by the Albanian company "ALBADEMIL" ltd., which has operated as a subcontractor of the American company "Southern Ammunition Company Inc."

During the investigation process, we are facing many obstacles related to the lack of technical expertise and equipment that are needed:

1. for the identification of victims;
2. for a full forensic investigation of the scene of the explosion, to determine properly the cause and sequence of events that took place from the beginning of the incident through its end.

Being in such circumstances and having in mind the importance of this case for the Albanian government and Albanian public opinion, I would like You to make possible the presence of a specialized assistance from Federal Bureau of Investigation (F.B.I).

I remain at Your availability for any further information that You might need.

Thanking You in advance for your fruitful cooperation, I am looking forward to a positive answer from You.

TIRANA 00000204 002 OF 002

General Prosecutor  
Ina Rama

5. (U) Begin text, informal Embassy translation of PG Rama's request for information on Southern Ammunition Company:

Protocol No. 822  
2008

Tirana, March 18,

Re: Assistance requested for the criminal investigation of Gerdec explosion

To: the U.S. Embassy

Honored Mr. Ambassador,

Expressing my highest consideration, I take this opportunity to present to You my official request for assistance related to the recent events in Gerdec village nearby Tirana, where a vast explosion caused the death of a considerable number of persons as well as many wounded and property damage. The prosecutor's office has started a criminal investigation of this case.

During the investigations carried out until now, it has been determined that the explosion occurred in an area used for the dismantling of military ammunitions. All actions for the dismantling of military ammunitions were done by the Albanian company "ALBADEMIL" ltd., which has operated as a subcontractor of the American company "Southern Ammunition Company Inc." The latest has a contract with the Albanian government through the state-owned company MEICO and has been assigned to undertake the above process.

The company "Southern Ammunition Company Inc" has its headquarters in the address "4232 Medow Street Loris, South Carolina 29569-3124, USA", and has been legally represented by the American citizen Patrick C. Henry III, born on 28.05.1956, holder of U.S. passport # 017008242. The company has this phone numbers 00995 32 22 09 34, mobile 0018432677405, and fax 0018437563226. Apart from the above person, in Albania has come another U.S. citizen Taylor Rodney Spencer, born on 20.03.1951, holder of U.S. Passport # 221090832.

Together with the documentation needed for finalizing contract, "Southern Ammunition Company Inc" has also submitted license # 730002498, issued by the Department of State on 9 May 2007.

The investigation needs data and information that can be found in the United States, and is difficult for the Albanian government to obtain. The information needed relates to the true activity of the U.S. company "Southern Ammunition Company Inc", its legal representatives, validity of the license submitted, whether it has another license related to armaments, the position of Patrick C. Henry III and Taylor Rodney Spencer in the company, whether Patrick C. Henry III was authorized by the company to contract in Albania and to contract with MEICO, whether the two above persons or "Southern Ammunition Company Inc" has completed bank transaction with physical or legal persons in Albania from October 2007 through March 2008, as well as any other information that may be available for these two persons.

Being in such circumstances and having in mind the importance of this case for the Albanian government and Albanian public opinion, I would like You to make possible that this information be available for the prosecution office.

I remain at Your availability for any further information that You might need.

Thanking You in advance for your fruitful cooperation, I am looking forward to a positive answer from You

General Prosecutor  
Ina Rama

End text.

WITHERS